

1863 McKNIGHT & SON 1913

Excerpts from two page advertisement issued as a supplement to the Brookville Republican, October 16, 1913.

Brief Sketch of the Life of the Founder of the Store.

Hon. William James McKnight, M. D., the subject of this sketch, was born and raised in the town of Brookville, Jefferson county, Pennsylvania, the date of his birth being May 6, 1836. Dr. McKnight's parents were Alexander and Mary (Thompson) McKnight, the father dying when W. J. was but thirteen months old. The Doctor received a limited education in the common schools.

For five years, from 1847 to 1852, he lived and worked on what is now the John J. McCurdy farm, in Washington township, Jefferson county. At the age of sixteen he began teaching school and working in the office of the Jefferson Star, learning the printer's trade. Two years later he began reading medicine under Dr. A. M. Clarke, of Brockwayville, and held a position as compositor on the Elk County Advocate. During the next three years, by practicing economy, he saved enough money to enable him to take a single course of medical lectures at Cincinnati, Ohio, during the winter of 1856-7, and March, following (1857) he began the practice of medicine in his native town, being the youngest doctor to ever open an office in the county.

His professional card of March 6th, 1857, was published in the Brookville papers, locating him as on Main street, opposite the Philadelphia Cheap Store.



Dr. W. J. McKnight, March 6, 1857.

About the 1st of December, 1857, Dr. McKnight associated with Dr. A. M. Clarke and moved his office to Clarke's residence and office, where Mrs. Ada Dickey Means now resides. His practice while under Dr. Clarke was large, extensive and wide, the Doctor riding all over Jefferson, Elk and Forest counties, keeping two saddle horses.

On September 1, 1859, he moved from Brookville to Brockwayville and entered into partnership with Dr. W. C. Niver. This partnership with Dr. Niver was terminated four years later, after they had established a large and extensive practice in Jefferson and Elk counties.

In this wilderness calls for surgical treatment were frequent. The erection of log cabins and log barns, the logging in lumber camps, the taking out of square timber, work in the shingle mills, saw mills, boat scaffolds, rafting in and down the creeks, the clearing of land and all such labor that had to be done with axes and sharp edged tools, caused dislocations, fractures, lacerations and cut wounds. Many of these were simple, but some were terrible.

In emergency calls to stop hemorrhage, tie arteries and save life the Doctor has plunged his horse into creeks and rivers, got on his knees in the saddle, took hold of the horn of the saddle, given his horse a loose rein, stemmed the current and swam across.

There is no doctor living that belonged to the first and second medical societies of Jefferson county but Dr. McKnight.

In 1869 he attended lectures in Philadelphia and received the degree of M. D. He afterward attended two full courses in succession at Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, Pa., from which institution he was graduated in March, 1884, and the same year received a degree from the school of anatomy and surgery. In 1885 he took a post-graduate course at Jefferson College.

From June, 1869, to September, 1870, Dr. McKnight was associated in Brookville, with L. A. Garver, M. D., and they had a large medical and surgical practice.

Dr. McKnight was the first physician to operate successfully for cataract in Jefferson county, and received in pay seven dollars and fifty cents in buckwheat and oats.

Dr. McKnight was the first physician in Jefferson county, to use the hypodermic syringe, viz: In Brookville, in May, 1866.

When Dr. McKnight commenced practicing medicine in Brookville in 1857, he had to ride on horse back, and he kept from one to three horses. In winter he rode in a homemade jumper. He rode all through and over the counties of Jefferson, Elk, Forest as well as the western part of Clearfield. His journeys were long, often riding day and night, through what is now DuBois, Brockwayville, Penfield, Ridgway, Kersey, Wilcox St. Marys, and all along the Clarion river. He has ridden seventy miles in daylight and set up all night with a sick patient. He traveled through mud, sleet, cold, snow and darkness, with no rubber garments to protect him. He traveled creek beds, forded and swam the Clarion river when in rafting stage and often rode over and through paths and roads from dark to daylight all alone through the wilderness twenty or forty miles, stopping about midnight to give his horse some feed and get a bite for himself, and many, many a time after this long journey the patient was too poor to feed the horse or to house him, but there was always some angel neighbor woman to shelter his horse and care for the Doctor. There are two such women still living in Elk county.

In some of Dr. McKnight's long rides he would become so tired about midnight that he felt he could not go a step farther, when he would dismount from his horse, hitch him to a log barn, slip the bridle around his neck, throw him some hay and then fall asleep in the haymow, only to awaken and find the sun high in the heavens, and then ride furiously on his errand of mercy to see his patient.

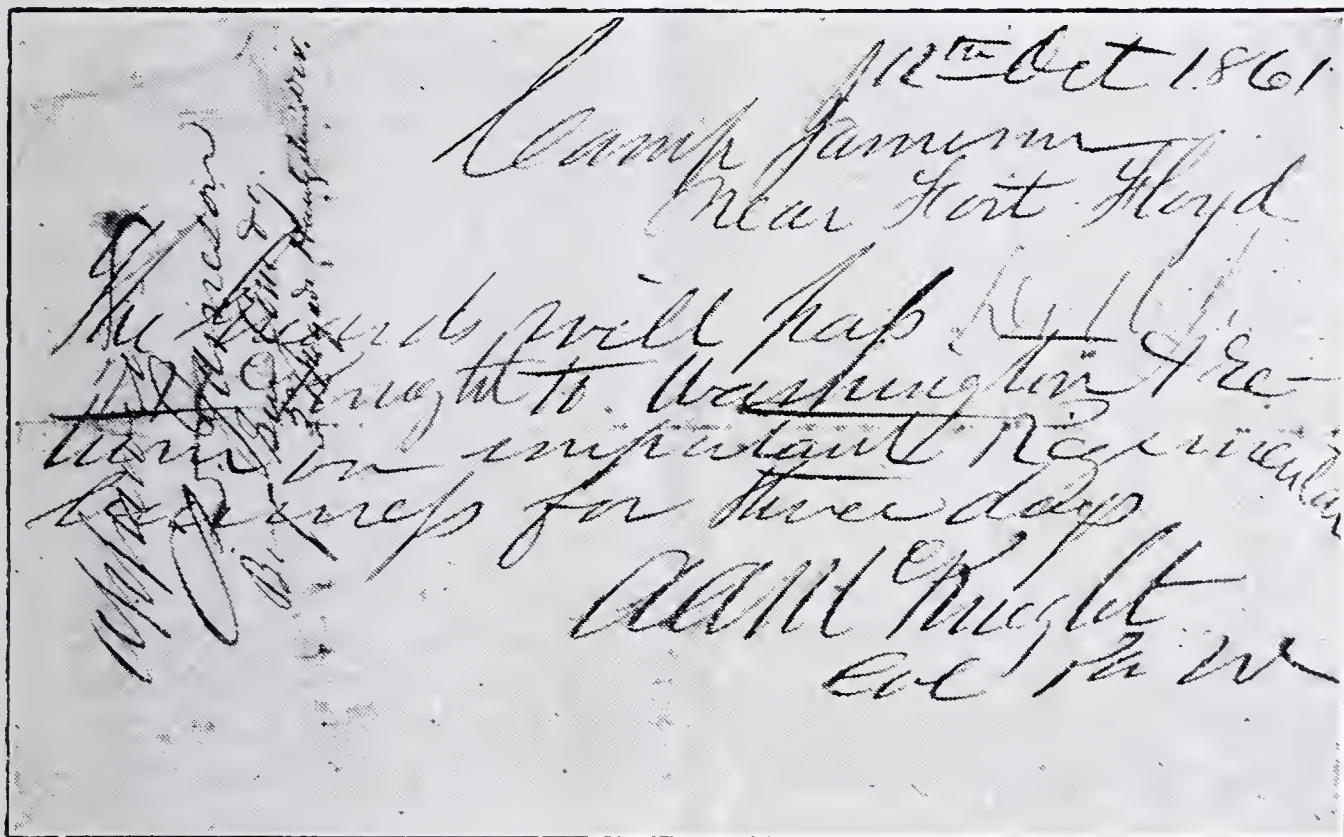
In 1862 Dr. McKnight had as many as 50 cases of smallpox at one time, seven down in one family and in a shanty. None of the 50 were ever able to pay anything to the Doctor for his services. The Doctor of this period did more charitable work for mankind than all other classes of

people combined, and for these sacrifices often in return he received the grossest and basest ingratitude.

In those days there were no telegraph, telephone or daily mail through which to summon a Doctor, but a neighbor had to be sent on foot or on horse back to find the physician and not to come back without him.

About the 15th of September, 1861, Dr. McKnight enlisted for the 105th Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers, and was transported as a soldier to Camp Jameson, near Alexandria, Virginia. With true patriotic purposes he was willing to serve the country in any capacity, but on meeting his brother, the Colonel, he found him opposed to the Doctor entering the service and was told that he would not permit him to be enrolled or mustered in the 105th. The Colonel said, "Dr., there are but us two McKnights, I am single, I expect to be killed, you are married, you return home and rear some future McKnights."

Hoping that the Colonel would relent, the Doctor remained with the regiment several weeks, doing important service for it, without money and without price. Finally the Colonel gave Dr. McKnight a soldier's transportation home and ordered him to leave camp. The following army passes will partly explain what has been here said:



Camp Jamison, October 16th, 1861.

Guards will pass Dr. W. J. McKnight to Washington City on important private business.

A. A. McKNIGHT, Colonel.

Approved: Brig. Genl. C. D. Jameson.

C. H. Potter, A. A. A. Genl.

Colonel McKnight was killed in the battle of Chancellorsville May 3d, 1863.

August 4, 1862, Governor Curtin appointed the Doctor examining surgeon for Jefferson and Forest counties. He served as private and orderly sergeant in Company G, 57th United States Emergency Regiment; was promoted to quartermaster sergeant, and took part in the campaign against Morgan.

Returning home in 1863 from the Morgan raid, Dr. McKnight stopped in Brookville and opened an office for the practice of medicine on Main street, where Mrs. Templeton now resides, opposite Moore and Smathers' store. Dr. McKnight was appointed United States Pension Surgeon Octo-

ber 22, 1863. He served for six years until other duties made it necessary for him to resign this position, which he did October 4, 1869.

In 1880 Dr. McKnight was elected by the Republicans of Jefferson and Indiana counties to the State Senate, where he served from 1881 to 1885. The Doctor took a very active part in all public measures brought before the Senate during his term of office. He was the author of several very important bills, and through his conservative and practical business methods were enacted a number of needed reforms whereby the Commonwealth was saved several hundred thousand dollars per annum. Honesty and economy with the people's money was his slogan. His reform in printing public documents saves the State forty thousand dollars a year. He advocated and secured the first additional appropriation, under the new constitution, to the schools of one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars; advocated the furnishing of schoolbooks free by the State to all the schools; and free schools in fact—school tax abolished, schools to be maintained and supported by the State. The attention he called to careless auditing brought into the State one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. He carried through a reform in the commencement of borough and township offices. He took an active interest in the wards of the State and gave a hearty support to the soldiers' orphans' schools, advocating justice to the soldier, his widow and his orphan. He introduced a bill providing for the classification of the insane, and advocated that the expense of their support be paid by the State. He originated and introduced a number of valuable reforms that fell for want of time. He pushed through the Senate in 1881 the bill authorizing counties to refund their bonds at a lower rate of interest. This law to refund bonds saved Jefferson county \$20,000. He originated, agitated and pushed through the Senate bill No. 117, entitled An Act For Promotion of Medical Science, by the distribution and use of unclaimed human bodies for scientific purposes, through a board created for that purpose, and to prevent unauthorized uses and traffic in human bodies, which was approved and signed June 18, 1883.

This law was vigorously assailed by Senators Herr, Stuart, Laird, Ross and others, and defended by Reyburne, Gredy, Patton and McKnight. The Honorable John J. Pearson listened to the discussion with great interest and at the conclusion of Dr. McKnight's remarks approached his desk, took his hand saying: "Doctor, I was bitterly, violently opposed to this measure, now since I have heard you I am just as violently in favor of it." This law in various forms has been enacted in nearly every state in the Union and the relief of suffering and saving of life to humanity as the result of such enactment is beyond human computation.

He supported and voted for the following laws: The law of 1881, Act No. 21, which provides proper means of conveyance of persons injured in and about the mines, to their homes; Act No. 54, 1881, "To provide the means for securing the health and safety of persons employed in the bituminous coal mines of Pennsylvania;" Act No. 173, 1881, "To secure to operators and laborers engaged in and about coal mines, manufactories of iron and steel, and all other manufactories, the payment of their wages at regular intervals and in lawful money of the United States" (this law regulates and prevents the excessive profit on merchandise); law of 1883, Act No. 16, "To provide for voluntary tribunals, to adjust disputes between employers and employed"; Act No. 46, 1883, "To protect the miners in the bituminous coal regions in this Commonwealth" (this law secures the miner pay for all clean coal mined by him without regard to size; makes seventy-six pounds of coal a bushel and two thousand

pounds a ton; requires all cars to be branded and uniform in size; creates the office of check weighman and defines his duties); Act No. 48, 1883, which now compels props and timber to be furnished; Act No. 97, 1883, creating a mining boss and defining his duties, providing for cut-throughs and holes for shelter, bore holes, printed rules, safety lamps, board of examiners, etc., also for six bituminous mine inspectors instead of three, and also for two mining engineers; Act No. 104, 1883, "For the better protection of the wages of mechanics, miners, laborers and others" (this law gives the laborer preference against insolvent companies or debtors).

In 1883 he introduced a joint resolution proposing certain amendments to the Constitution of this Commonwealth to lessen the number, extend the tenure and fix the salary of our legislators. This speech received great celebrity. It was published in the Daily and Weekly Telegraph of Harrisburg. In closing his speech Dr. McKnight said:

"And while advocating this measure, Mr. President, I am impelled to the belief that no Senator in this hall can afford to disregard public sentiment on this subject. This is a reform; it is an economic reform and by its adoption the State will save in each sitting of the Assembly two hundred and sixty-six thousand dollars. This is no party measure. Every Senator can support it. And, Mr. President, more especially is it fitting and proper that this bill in the interest of practical economy and reform shall receive the unqualified endorsement of my colleagues who have been elected to this body as reformers, and of those, too, who in times past have flaunted in the face of the people of this Commonwealth the banner of "Independence and Reform." Such Senators have an opportunity now, and they will gladly embrace it, and show to the world that they are men of "deeds as well as men of words." No real reformer can lend himself consistently to the defeat of so meritorious a reform measure as this.

"And, Mr. President, to further assist in promoting the public good, to promote the honest government and purify the public service, I would make all officers in both State and Nation, except the merest clerkships, elective by the people. I would elect postmasters, collectors, marshals, and especially United States Senators. Time forbids me to enumerate all the offices that should be elected in our State. But, Mr. President, the new Constitution has been tried and found imperfect. This measure only seeks to perfect it in part. The Constitution is not the government but we, the people are, and "all power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority and instituted for their peace, safety and happiness. For the advancement of these ends, they have at all times an unalienable and indefeasible right to alter, amend, perfect, reform or abolish any part, or parts of their government, and in such manner as they may think proper. In any event, and at all cost, Mr. President, we must preserve our popular rule, we must preserve our free institutions and to do so we must devise some change or plan to drive from the service all corrupt, incompetent demagogues—men of jumbo professions and of pigmy deeds—and call in their stead men of honor, men of intelligence, men of broad common sense, men of truth, men who have courage, men who know the right and dare to do it, men who love our free schools, our free speech, our free homes and our free country—then, and not until then, will this State and Nation become what God in his wisdom and mercy designed."

Dr. McKnight was regularly re-nominated in 1884 for a second term but George W. Hood, of Indiana, an Independent, defeated him at the election. Dr. McKnight was then and is now a radical Republican. Dr.

McKnight was twice elected School Director in Brookville Borough, to-wit: In 1858 and 1885.

Dr. McKnight has been a bituminous coal operator since 1895, opening and running the Toby Valley Coal Company, also the McKnight Coal Company, which are still (in 1913) in active operation.

As a writer Dr. McKnight is the author of "My First Recollections of Brookville, Pa."; "Recollections of Ridgway, Pa."; also of the "Pioneer History of Jefferson Cuntty, Pa."; "A Pioneer Outline History of Northwestern Pennsylvania," embracing fourteen counties, and of "Pioneer Sketches of the Cities of Allegheny, Beaver, DuBois, and Towanda, Pa.," and a frequent contributor to his home papers. And now, in 1913, as director and vice president of the National Bank of Brookville, Pa., merchant, coal operator, writer and author, he is still active.

Dr. McKnight married Penelope Goddard Clarke January 9, 1860, and they celebrated their golden wedding January 9, 1910. Seven children were born to this union; four of whom are now living, viz: Amor Archer; Mary Adeline, wife of H. H. Kennedy; Jay Byron, and Bonnie, the wife of George R. Matson. All reside in Brookville.

The McKnight Store----Its Organization and History.

On October 8th, 1863, in addition to his practice Dr. McKnight started the present drug store of McKnight & Son in what was then the East end of the Clements building, Rev. David Eason assisting as clerk.

On January 1st, 1864, he took as a partner his half-brother, Mr. Thomas L. Templeton, who assumed the clerkship.

Local notices of Dr. McKnight's store were made in the papers, but the first general advertisement of the store was publishd, namely:

W. J. McKNIGHT & BRO.

MOORHEAD HOUSE,

Brookville, Pa.

wholesale and retail dealers in

DRUGS, MEDICINES AND CHEMICALS, DYE WOODS AND DYE STUFFS

OILS, PAINTS, PAINTERS ARTICLES, VARNISHES, PUTTY,

GLASSWARE, PERFUMERY, FINE SOAPS.

FINE HAIR AND TOOTH BRUSHES.

PAINT BRUSHES.

All the Patent or Proprietary

Medicines of the Day.

CANDLES.

A superior lot of Lamps and Lamp Chimneys constantly on hand.

WE HAVE THE BEST CARBON OIL

in the market, which we will sell at 75 cents per gallon; and Groceries of the best quality, as low as can be bought in town.

Our CIGARS and TOBACCO are the best that have ever been offered in the county.

Customers and Physicians will always find at this establishment fresh and unadulterated Medicines, which have been selected with great personal care for this market. All purchasers are invited to examine the stock, as they will find it equal to any other in this section.

The pioneer goods for this store were hauled from Mahoning by William Harmon. He had four mules. All goods were hauled either from Kittanning, Mahoning, Red Bank, Indiana or Ridgway. It took from three to four days to make a trip. Freight charges were about \$1.00 a hundred. On the twenty-third day of June, 1873, the railroad was completed to Brookville. McKnight & Bro. then had all their goods shipped by rail and mostly in car lots. Being agents for the Standard Oil Co., their freights were heavy. The partnership with Mr. Templeton continued until July, 1891, when he withdrew to assume the cashiership of the National Bank of Brookville. The partnership was quite prosperous. The store became now, as originally, Dr. McKnight's.

On May, 1865, McKnight and Brother opened a news department and a newspaper delivery from their store. In November of the same year they engaged more extensively and advertised as follows.

"We have just concluded arrangements with the N. Y. American News Co. for the delivery to us of all the leading publications of the day, among which are **Atlantic Monthly, N. Y. Tribune, N. Y. Herald, Harper's Publications, N. Y. Clipper, Wilkes' Spirit, Leslie's Weekly and Monthly**, and an innumerable variety of other papers and magazines which will give to the public at lower figures than they have ever heretofore been sold. Give us a call. McKnight & Bros."

On Sunday evening, November 5, 1871, the store of McKnight & Bro. was destroyed by fire at a loss of ten thousand dollars with no insurance. The fire commenced in the Clements (Moorhead) barn and all the buildings on the square west to Barnett were destroyed. In December, 1869, McKnight & Bro. purchased from Kline & Verstine one-half town lot opposite the Court house, paying for the same five thousand dollars. In April, 1871, they commenced the erection of a three story brick building, the basement of which was finished and occupied on Tuesday evening, November 7, after the fire, where they opened up their store again. In February, 1872, the entire building was completed and the store room occupied. This store room has been enlarged from time to time until it is now 29½ by 94 feet long, 14 ft. high. Basement 29½ by 94 ft. long and 9 ft. high. The interior is finished in walnut and hardwood, in short, it is a room in style and finish not excelled by any other store in the western part of the state. In the spring of 1869 they started the wall paper trade in the town; all wall paper, until 1872, was trimmed by the hanger with a pair of long shears.

On May 1, 1893, J. B. McKnight became a junior partner in the store, under the firm name of McKnight & Son. On July 1, 1901, Albert Gooder purchased a fourth interest in the store, and the firm name was changed to McKnight, Son & Company. As a clerk Albert Gooder was efficient, honest and industrious, and as a partner he continued the same. For more than twenty-seven years he was connected with the store. On April 23, 1911, Albert Gooder died suddenly. On May 16, 1911, J. B. McKnight bought Mr. Gooder's interest, and the firm name was again changed to McKnight & Son.

